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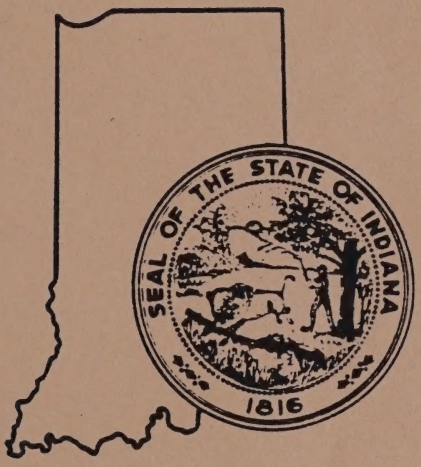
Hoosiers With Custer



A Biographical Directory of the Indiana Men
Who Rode with General George A. Custer on the
Sioux Expedition of 1876.

HOOSIERS WITH CUSTER

A Biographical Directory of the Indiana Men
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Sioux Expedition of 1876.

by

James V. Schneider

FOR HEIDI SCHNEIDER

MY "PRINCESS"

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-two men from Indiana who took part in the events of June 25-26, 1876, were an interesting lot. The average Hoosier trooper was 27½ years old, stood 5'7½" tall, had brown hair, and either gray or brown eyes. One trooper, Private John H. Day, was eventually murdered; another, Private David W. Harris, won the Medal of Honor for his participation in the fight on Reno Hill, and one, Private George W. Stephens, was illiterate.

A twenty-third man, Lieutenant Edward Gustave Mathey, was not a native Hoosier, but he served with various Indiana Civil War regiments and he lived his early life in Corydon. His biography appears in the Appendix at the end of this booklet.

It is hoped by the author that this work will lead to further research into the lives of these men and all who fell during that two-day period in the Centennial Year of our country.

James V. Schneider
Ft. Wayne, Indiana
1988

HOOSIERS ON THE SIOUX OF 1876

NAME AND RANK	PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH	COMPANY
Bott, George A., Private	Ft. Wayne, 1853	A
Harris, David W., Private	Indianapolis, 1852	A
**Reeves, Francis M., Private	Bluffton, 1847	A
Burns, Charles, Private	Howard County, 1848	B
*Brightfield, John, Private	Dearborn County, 1853	C
Day, John H., Private	Warren County, 1851	D
O'Mann, William, Private	Hamilton County, 1849	D
Russell, Thomas, Sergeant	Oxford, 1848	D
Smith, Henry G., Private	Lake County, 1849	D
*Mason, Henry S., Corporal	Brownville, 1847	E
Shields, William, Saddler	Vincennes, 1841	E
*Smallwood, William, Private	Jonesville, 1852	E
Stephens, George W., Private	Madison, 1843	E
*Coleman, Charles, Corporal	Terre Haute, 1851	F
*Warren, George A., Private	Gibson County, 1840	F
Wallace, John W., Corporal	Salem, 1850	G
*Horn, Marion E., Private	Richmond, 1853	I
*Clear, Elihu F., Private	Randolph County, 1844	K
Hare, Luther R., 2nd Lieut.	Greencastle, 1851	K
Brown, Nathan T., Private	Marion County, 1843	L
Nunan, John, Corporal	Ft. Wayne, 1847	L
*Streing, Frederick, Corporal	Ripley County, 1851	M

*denotes killed in action
**denotes wounded in action

BOTT, GEORGE A., Private---------Company A

Private Bott was born in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, in 1853. Before joining the Seventh, he had been a clerk. Lieutenant Patrick Cusack enlisted him on September 16, 1875, in Cincinnati. He had gray eyes, brown hair, fair complexion, and was 5'7" tall. He was discharged on September 15, 1880, at Fort Meade, Dakota Territory, upon expiration of service, as a Private of good character.

BRIGHTFIELD, JOHN, Private-------Company C

Private Brightfield was born in Dearborn County on June 23, 1853. Before joining the Seventh, he had been a cabinetmaker. He was enlisted on October 7, 1875, in Cincinnati, by Lieutenant Patrick Cusack. He had brown eyes, brown hair, dark complexion, and was 5'9¾" tall. He was killed on June 25, 1876, and is listed as "Jno. Brightfield" on the battle monument.

BROWN, NATHAN T., Private--------Company L

Private Brown was born in Marion County in 1843. He liked the life of a soldier and enlisted a second time on November 25, 1874, at Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dakota Territory. The man who enlisted him was Custer's Adjutant, Lieutenant William W. Cooke. He had gray eyes, black hair, dark complexion, and was 5'7" tall. He was killed on September 13, 1877, at Canyon Creek, Montana Territory, in an engagement against the Nez Perce Indians. He was originally interred on that battlefield, but was later re-interred at the Custer Battlefield National Cemetery, Grave 1415B. He is listed on the internment records at the cemetery as "Nathan J. Brown."

BURNS, CHARLES, Private---------Company B

Private Burns was born in Howard County in 1848. He evidently had served during the Civil War, for he listed "soldier" as his previous occupation when he enlisted on March 8, 1876, in Baltimore. Lieutenant William Wallace gave him his oath. He had blue eyes, brown hair, florid complexion, and was 5'9" tall. He was assigned to Company B of the Seventh, and was discharged on March 7, 1881, at Fort Yates, Dakota Territory, upon expiration of service, as a Private of good character.

CLEAR, ELIHU F., Private--------Company K

Private Clear was born in Randolph County in 1844. He was enlisted into the Seventh for a second time on January 4, 1872, in Yorkville, South Carolina, by Captain Owen Hale. He had blue eyes, brown hair, dark complexion, and was 5'6½" tall. He

became an orderly for Dr. James DeWolf, and on the 25th of June, both he and Dr. DeWolf were killed while climbing the bluffs after Major Reno's debacle in the valley of the Little Big Horn. He is listed as "E.F. Clear" on the battle monument and elsewhere as "Eli U.T. Clair" and "Elihue F. Clear" and "Elihue M.T. Clair."

COLEMAN, CHARLES, Private--------Company F

Private Coleman was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, in 1851. Before joining the Seventh, he had been a laborer. He was enlisted on September 9, 1873, in Cincinnati, by Lieutenant Adam Kramer. He had blue eyes, dark hair, ruddy complexion, and was 5'5¼" tall. He fell with the rest of his Company on June 25, 1876. He is listed as "Chas. Coleman" on the battle monument.

DAY, JOHN H., Private----------Company H

Private Day was born in Warren County in 1851. Before joining the Seventh he had been a shoemaker. He was enlisted in Chicago, Illinois, on September 23, 1873, by Captain Frederick Benteen. He had hazel eyes, auburn hair, fair complexion, and was 5'7" in height. He was discharged as a Private, upon expiration of service, on September 23, 1878, at Fort Lincoln, Dakota Territory. He evidently enlisted again, though no record of that enlistment exists. However, records do indicate that he served time in the military prison at Fort Leavenworth for desertion in 1882. He was released in September, 1884, and he was murdered on June 13, 1894.

HARRIS, DAVID W., Private--------Company A

Private Harris was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1852. Before joining the Seventh, he had been a laborer. He was enlisted on September 29, 1873, in Cincinnati, by Lieutenant Adam Kramer. He had blue eyes, brown hair, florid complexion, and was 5'6¾" tall. He participated in the fighting on Reno Hill on the 25th and 26th, and he was awarded the Medal of Honor on October 5, 1878, for bringing water to the wounded at great danger to his life and under a most galling fire from the enemy. He was discharged on September 29, 1878, at Camp James G. Sturgis, Dakota Territory, upon expiration of service, as a Private of good character.

HARE, LUTHER R., Second Lieutenant--Company K

Second Lieutenant Hare was born in Greencastle, Indiana, on August 24, 1851. He entered West Point on September 1, 1870,

and graduated on June 17, 1874, ranking 25th in his class of 41 graduates. He was appointed a Second Lieutenant, Seventh Cavalry on June 17, 1874, and he served in the garrison at Colfax, Louisiana, until 1876. On June 25, 1876, he was with the detachment of Indian Scouts under Lieutenant Charles Varnum in Major Reno's battalion. After fighting in the valley, he joined Company K and participated in the fighting on Reno Hill on the 26th. He was promoted to First Lieutenant to date from June 25, 1876, in order to fill the vacancy created in Company I by the death of Lieutenant James Porter. The following year, he participated in the Nez Perce Campaign. He continued to serve in the West and was promoted to Captain on December 29, 1890, as a result of a vacancy created after the fight against the Sioux at Wounded Knee Creek, South Dakota. On May 14, 1898, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, 1st Texas Volunteer Cavalry, and on June 14 of the same year, he received a promotion to Colonel of the same regiment. He was honorably mustered out of the volunteer service in November, 1898, but just eight months later, he received an appointment as Colonel of the 33rd U.S. Volunteer Infantry, and he took that regiment to the Philippines. He was once again appointed to a high rank in the volunteers (Brigadier General) and served until his discharge from the volunteers on June 20, 1891. He later was made a Major of the 12th Cavalry and served in this capacity until he was retired for disability on July 16, 1903. He then served as Inspection Instructor of Militia, and a Professor of Military Science and Tactics at the University of Texas at Austin. He was again promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, Retired, on July 9, 1916, and was appointed Commander of the Student Army Training Corps at Simmons College. He held this position until February 15, 1919, when he was relieved from active duty for the last time. He died on December 22, 1929, in Walter Reed Hospital, Washington; he was 78. He was interred in Arlington National Cemetery.

HORN, MARION E., Private----------Company I

Private Horn was born in Richmond, Indiana, on August 26, 1853. Before joining the Seventh, he had been a laborer. He was enlisted on November 15, 1872, in Cincinnati, by Lieutenant James Wheelan. He had hazel eyes, brown hair, florid complexion, and was 5'6½" tall. He was killed with the rest of his Company on June 25, 1876, and is listed as "M.E. Horn" on the battle monument.

MASON, HENRY S., Corporal---------Company E

Corporal Mason was born in Brownville, Indiana, in 1847. He enlisted in the Seventh for a second time on August 4, 1875, in Louisville, Kentucky. He had gray eyes, sandy hair, fair complexion, and was 5'11¾" tall--the tallest of the Hoosiers with Custer. He attained the rank of Sergeant, but was reduced to

the rank of Private for "gross neglect of duty" during the 1874 expedition into the Black Hills. This demotion may be found in the Descriptive List and Records File at Custer Battlefield under "Company Order Nr. 11, July 10, 1874, Camp, Grand River, Dakota." By the time he fell with his Company on June 25, 1876, he had advanced to the rank of Corporal. He is listed as "H.S. Mason" on the battle monument.

O'MANN, WILLIAM, Private---------Company D

Private O'Mann was born in Hamilton County in 1849. Before joining the Seventh, he had been a hostler--an individual who took care of horses at an inn. He was enlisted on October 12, 1875, in Cincinnati, by Lieutenant Patrick Cusack. He had brown eyes, brown hair, dark complexion, and was 5'8" tall. He was discharged on October 11, 1880, at Fort Yates, Dakota Territory, upon expiration of service, as a Private of good character.

REEVES, FRANCIS M., Private------Company A

Private Reeves was born in Bluffton, Indiana, in 1847. He had been a teamster before joining the Seventh. He was enlisted on October 7, 1875, in St. Louis, by Lieutenant John Thompson. He had gray eyes, light hair, florid complexion, and was 5'5½" tall. At the Battle of the Little Big Horn on June 25, 1876, he was wounded in the left side and body. He was transported back to Fort Abraham Lincoln with the rest of the wounded aboard the steamer *Far West*. He was discharged at Fort Lincoln on December 20, 1878, for disability, as a Private of good character. He died at the Soldiers' Home in Washington, D.C., on September 4, 1902.

RUSSELL, THOMAS, Sergeant--------Company D

Sergeant Russell was born in Oxford, Indiana, in 1848. He had been a laborer before joining the Seventh. He was enlisted on August 5, 1872, in Chicago, Illinois, by Captain Samuel Young. He had brown eyes, dark hair, dark complexion, and was 5'4" tall. He was discharged on June 23, 1877, at camp on the Tongue River, Montana Territory, by Special Order Nr. 70, Department of Dakota, as a Sergeant of excellent character.

SHIELDS, WILLIAM, Saddler--------Company E

Saddler Shields was born in Vincennes, Indiana, in 1841. He evidently liked the soldier's life, for he was enlisted for the third time on September 29, 1874, at Fort Abraham Lincoln, Dakota Territory, by Lieutenant Thomas McDougall. He was 33 at the time. He had gray eyes, brown hair, fair complexion,

and was 5'8" tall. He was discharged on September 29, 1874, at Fort Meade, Dakota Territory, upon expiration of service, as a Saddler of excellent character. On September 6, 1888, he died and was buried in the post cemetery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Section, IV, Grave 1342.

SMALLWOOD, WILLIAM, Private-------Company E

Private Smallwood was born in Jonesville, Indiana, in 1852. Before joining the Seventh, he had been a farmer. He was enlisted on December 18, 1874, in Cincinnati, by Lieutenant Patrick Cusack. He had brown eyes, brown hair, dark complexion, and was 5'8⅜" tall. He fell with the rest of his Company on June 25, 1876, and is listed as "Wm. Smallwood" on the battle monument.

SMITH, HENRY G., Private----------Company D

Private Smith was born in Lake County in 1849. He had been a butcher before joining the Seventh. He was enlisted or September 8, 1875, in Chicago, Illinois, by Lieutenant Edmund Luff. He had gray eyes, brown hair, dark complexion, and was 5'9" tall. He deserted on February 19, 1877, and was not heard from after that.

STEPHENS, GEORGE W., Private------Company G

Private Stephens was born in Madison, Indiana, in 1843. He had been a cooper (one who repairs barrels and makes casks) before joining the Seventh. He was enlisted on April 4, 1876, in St. Louis Barracks, by Lieutenant John Thompson. He had brown eyes, black hair, dark complexion, and was 5'8½" tall. Possibly due to the fact that he was illiterate, Private Stephens was on detached service at the Yellowstone Depot, Montana Territory, during the battle on the 25-26 of June, 1876. He died on March 19, 1887, in Knox City, Missouri.

STREING, FREDERICK, Corporal------Company M

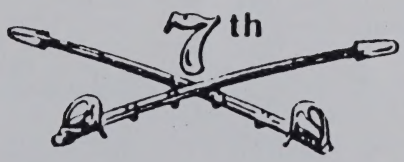
Corporal Streing was born in Ripley County in 1851. Before joining the Seventh, he had been a laborer. He was enlisted on October 19, 1872, in Louisville, Kentucky, by Lieutenant Peter Vroom. He had gray eyes, light hair, fair complexion, and was 5'5¾" tall. He fell in battle on June 25, 1876, and is listed as "Fred'k Streing" on the battle monument, and elsewhere as "Fred Stringer."

WALLACE, JOHN W., Corporal--------Company G

Corporal Wallace was born in Salem, Indiana, in 1850. He had been a farmer before joining the Seventh. He was enlisted on November 1, 1872, in Kansas City by Lieutenant John Morrison. He had blue eyes, auburn hair, florid complexion, and was 5'9" tall. He was discharged on June 25, 1877, by Special Order Nr. 70, Department of Dakota, as a Corporal of excellent character.

WARREN, GEORGE A., Private--------Company F

Private Warren was born in Gibson County in 1840, making him the oldest of the Hoosier troopers who rode with Custer to the Little Big Horn. He had been a carpenter before joining the Seventh. He was enlisted on September 7, 1875, in St. Louis by Captain Owen Hale. He had hazel eyes, brown hair, fair complexion, and was 5'9½" tall. He fell with his Company on June 25, 1876, and is listed as "Geo. Warren" on the battle monument.



APPENDIX

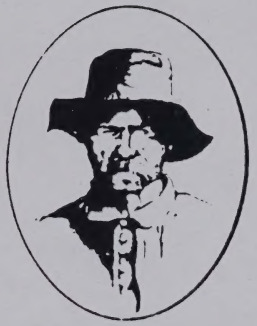
The twenty-second native Hoosier to serve under Custer on the Sioux Expedition of 1876 was Corporal John Nunan (also known as "Noonan") who was born in Fort Wayne in 1847. His story is so interesting that it is the subject of a separate monograph and is not included in the main body of this work.

Pictures of Corporal Nunan, Lieutenant Hare, and Lieutenant Mathey appear later in this Appendix.

MATHEY, EDWARD GUSTAVE, First Lieutenant-------Company M

Lieutenant Mathey was born in Besancon, France, on October 27, 1837. At the age of eight, he came to the United States with his father and settled in Corydon, the first capital of the state. He enlisted as a Private in the 17th Indiana Volunteer Infantry on June 12, 1861, and was promoted to the rank of Sergeant, Company C, to rank from May 31, 1861. Less than a year later, on May 1, 1862, he was appointed Second Lieutenant with the same regiment. Because the 17th Indiana was not seeing much action, less than three months later (August 10), he resigned his commission. He was then appointed a Second Lieutenant in the 81st Indiana Volunteer Infantry to rank from September 1, 1862. He fought with this regiment throughout the rest of the war and was engaged in the battle of Stones River and Chickamauga. He was promoted to First Lieutenant effective March 21, 1863, and to Captain on November 8, 1863. He and the regiment participated in the Western Theater of operations for the remainder of the war. He was promoted to Major effective September 12, 1864, and was mustered out of volunteer service less than a year later on June 13, 1865. He returned to Corydon and married Julia Jones, but soldering had gotten into his blood. As a result, he joined the Seventh Cavalry on September 24, 1867, as a Second Lieutenant. On the 10th of May, 1870, he was promoted to First Lieutenant. During this time with the Seventh, Mathey participated in all the major engagements that made the fame of the Seventh unparalleled--the Washita Campaign of 1868, the Yellowstone Expedition of 1873, and the Black Hills Expedition of 1864. On May 17, 1876, he departed with the rest of the Seventh to participate in the Sioux Expedition. From June 22, he commanded the regimental pack train, and on June 25-26, he was in the fighting atop Reno Hill. He returned to Fort Lincoln on September 26 with the remnant of the Seventh. The following year saw his participation in the Nez Perce Campaign against Chief Joseph. He was promoted to Captain to rank from September 30, 1877, after the Snake Creek fight near the Bear Paw Mountains. After this, he served as a recruiting officer for the cavalry in Chicago. This activity lasted from September 1890-October 1892. On December 11, 1896, he retired with the rank of Major for disability incurred in the line of duty. He then became a Professor of Military Science and Tactics at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, from October 1901-June 1903. He was then promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, USA, retired, on April 23, 1904. He then moved to Denver, Colorado, where he died on July 17, 1915, at the age of 77. He was interred in Arlington National Cemetery, Section 3, Grave 2089.

Lieutenant Luther R. Hare



Corporal John Nunan

Lieutenant Edward G. Mathey

THE THREE MOST FAMOUS HOOSIERS ON THE SIOUX EXPEDITION OF 1876

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